

Amathole District Municipality Takes Tourism To Another Level.

Judy Ngoloyi

EAST LONDON: Local Economic Development Manager of Amathole District Municipality (ADM) Mpumi Fundam has admitted that to date the municipality has not been effective enough in promoting ADM as a viable tourism destination. Addressing Imbizo tourism delegates at the function which was held at the East London Golf Club on 19 September 2007 with various stakeholders, Fundam said there is a great need to draft a tourism plan. The Tourism Imbizo formed part of the activities that were undertaken by ADM during September which is tourism and heritage month.

Fundam said: “Today we are unable to attract the visitors that we could. We are saying as ADM that we would like to work together with our stakeholders”. He also acknowledged that a more productive, collaborative approach was a step in the right direction.

“If we collaborate and cooperate in our marketing and put together our budgets, I believe that we can be more effective,” he added. He also urged local communities to play a more leading role in the development of the tourism industry.

Tourism consultant Simon Njock-Enoch said tourism has many forward and backward linkages with other sectors of the economy and industries, and in order for it to be more effective a more collaborate approach was needed. Njock-Enoch said the private sector could play a pivotal role by mobilizing resources to boost community based tourism initiatives.

A tourism roleplayer, Vuyokazi Sipuka, said the main problem is that government is not coming to the party. “For as long as we don’t have committed and passionate people about tourism, tourism is not going to achieve its goal in this province. Eastern Cape is the richest province throughout the country but we are the most under-performing because we lack people from government who are passionate about tourism.

Giving perspective on how best tourism is practiced in KwaZulu Natal, James Seymour said to date they have registered 30 websites for tourism in their province.

He emphasized that branding 2010 Soccer FIFA World Cup presents significant opportunities to raise awareness of South Africa as a tourist destination. He said the number of TV viewers in 2010 will probably increase or be higher than in 2002 since South Africa falls within the same time zones as other soccer loving countries.

During the Imbizo it emerged that East London has been nominated as a satellite city but has not yet been given an award. He said this poses a major challenge to Buffalo City Municipality because certain areas will battle in terms of accommodation. Seymour said areas such as King William’s Town can begin to be on the look out for opportunities as visitors need relaxed places of accommodation.

The Tourism Imbizo was a joint initiative of the Amathole District Municipality, Buffalo City Municipality and Eastern Cape Tourism Board. **END**